

AS FOR MYSELF



That's me . . . taken the day I left Cottage Hill.

On March 24th, Mrs. Leslie Bonnell and Jimmy Lowell came over to get me back to good old Fairhope. That sure was a happy day for me. It was grand to be back to Baldwin County and Fairhope, the city endowed with nature's beauty, flowers and wonderful people. All were genuinely happy to see me back and I was just as happy to be back. My Easter was a joyous one indeed, with three festive meals; breakfast at the C. A. Gastons, a German flavored dinner, the kind I'm used to, at the Stuersels and supper at the Murrells. We expected Cpl. Albert Murrell on his furlough ere he was going across, in from Boise, Idaho, on that day, and a festive meal was prepared. But Easter being also Fools Day, nature played a trick. A big wind and storm cut off Baldwin County from Mobile. The causeway was under water. And tho we were but 20 miles apart, there was no other way to cross Mobile Bay. It sure was disappointing, especially for the Murrells. The span was out of use for some 20 hours, and some 4,000 workers were stranded in Baldwin County alone. Al came in next day tho, and the festivities continued. On May 6th I left for New Orleans to see about my voice, and was attended by Dr. LeJeune, a specialist, at Ochsner Clinic. I stayed with a good old pal of mine, Bob Koen, a native of Millry, Ala. He has a large batchelors apartment in the heart of the French quarter (Vieux Carre), on Chartres St., which he shares with two other equally fine lads. New Orleans and its Vieux Carre is probably the most unique spot in USA. I know of no other city that can compare to it. I was living in an atmosphere that took me back 300 years, facing the Pontalba buildings, Jackson Square and in the next block of the Cabildo and St. Louis Cathedral. There is no denying that this section is rich in lore and enchantment plus a unique beauty, yet, everything seems so congested that I'd fear to live longer than one week in such a neighborhood. Yet, the place I

stayed in was so airy, so high ceillinged, very tall windows that are doors too, leading out to iron laced balcony, containing no dank or mustiness. But from the outside, it seems so mysterious. I rode back from New Orleans with Mrs. Hoffman, our School Home Mother. The drive, especially from Bay St. Louis to Pascagoula, is one of the loveliest, it even beats Riverside Drive in New York and the South and North Shore Drives of Chicago. Southern mansions on one side, the blue-green Gulf of Mexico on the other, is most enchanting. Giant live oaks draped in gray beards of Spanish moss, oleanders, roses, amarilla lillies, and many other flowers in enchanting bloom. Truly a sight. While in my lap was seated a lovely and exotic foreign maiden with the bluest of eyes and bewitching hair coloring that seemed most natural. She is Miss Thal, a Siamese kitten that belongs to Mrs. Hoffman. Regarding my voice, which I lost some fifteen months ago, the Dr. said that there was nothing he could do to restore it. However, he did say that after my chest will have been forgotten as an ailing object, and since the larynx trouble is secondary as an ailment, the voice will come back on its own accord—which is an encouragement. My only medicine prescribed is "take it easy, eat well, plenty sunshine, and to tell all who associate with me that they should do the talking and I the listening." So here I done tole y'all. I still say, why couldn't I have been rich instead of goodlooking? The above prescription sounds wonderful for money folk, not for paupers like yours truly. Well, God is great! As we say in Lithuanian: "Dievas dave dantis—duos ir duonos." Since God provided teeth He will also provide food." On the 26th of April I spent the day in Robertsdale, Ala. Cooperville, to be exact, where Mrs. Hobbs, one of 17 Cooper children, resides, and spent the day with Emma, who was a co-patient at Cottage Hill, Woody Skinner and family. I feasted real Southern style and I truly had a great day. Woody took me over to Loxley (Robertsdale and Loxley are the potato centers of Alabama) and I was learning new things. Potatoes everywhere were being dug, separated and graded. The process was very interesting. German prisoners of War were lugging sack after sack of spuds. Some looked like real Superman specimens, made for that very job; others were aged men, while others were very young lads, perhaps but 17-18 years old. I spoke to a man in the fifties. He was thrilled that one could speak in his native tongue. His eyes shone with joy. He is a native of Mainz, the city that is no more, and worried about his family of whom he did not hear over a year. He expressed great satisfaction at being captured, berated Hitler and in his conversations he tried to impress that he never hated anyone of any nationality, not even Jews. His conscience must have troubled him. I told him I was amazed that such young lads had to bear arms. He said that they drafted ever kids of 12, and that he said with genuine disgust. Even tho—perhaps my family was slaughtered out by the Germans, I nevertheless, felt

great pity for the young lads and even that old man. But God knows best, and He metes out the judgment accordingly. Germany and her people will be repaying for generations for the heinous crimes inspired by a bunch of sadistic madmen. Needless to say, the day was not only enjoyable, but educational and most interesting to me. To the Hobbs and Woody my thanks. Before I retire to my monastic life on a farm with my cousins in Indiana, a dear friend of mine obtained for me a small suite of rooms at the Windermere-East Hotel, 1642 E. 56th St., Chicago 37, Ill., plus all luxuries . . . such as Lake Michigan and Jackson Park right there. And I sure am greatly indebted to him. Thus, my Chicago friends will be able to get to see me. I shall be eager to see as many as possible. However, I still must observe rest periods, and I know that after going through the mill, none will want to see me relapse; therefore I'll be glad to see any one of my friends between 3 and 8 p. m. I'll be in Chicago from May 3rd on. (P. S. In case you ever forget my Chicago address mail will always reach me if sent to Fairhope, Ala.) Pasimatysim, Vyts-Fin. Two Years of Viltis —May marks two happy years of the appearance of Viltis. Much has taken place during these two years. Many wars were fought and much blood was shed, and many of our dear friends are no more among us. While I have weathered through a dreadful illness. Even tho Viltis made its regular appearance in spite of grave illness, when, by right, I was permitted to write only a few postcards. Even tho it was perhaps foolish on my part to expose myself to further dangers, I also feel that Viltis was a source of joy to me and helped me toward my cure and easing my mind from many unpleasant thoughts regarding myself and my unfortunate kin. It kept me happy reading all the swell letters of all my friends and to note their appreciation of my endeavor. Much credit goes to Hugh Jones, who was the instigator of Viltis. It was through his persistant insistence that Viltis was undertaken. He is also our arch-patron, as you will note in the list of contributions. Two years ago I dreaded the undertaking. Presently, I'm happy I did even tho it will keep me tied down. Viltis is also highly indebted to Lily (Mrs. Jos.) Payson, who mimeographed and supplied paper for a whole year during Viltis' infancy and during the critical days of my illness. She is one of the most devout friends Viltis and the Service men had. Our debt to her can hardly be expressed in words. Also, our appreciation to all friends and patrons whose contributions made the publication of Viltis possible in printed form since September 1944. Here is hoping that they who as yet have not joined our patrons' list will do so and see that Viltis keeps on coming. It is almost a duty. We presently have 340 readers of whom less than 90 are patrons.

Our thanks to "Spider" Gaston and the Courier Staff who print Viltis. Not only are they doing a good job of it, but also print it at a cost which gives them no profit, but plenty work. Thanks loads! I chose the Lithuanian word "Viltis" for the name because it means "hope". I hoped that the war would end when Viltis reached its second anniversary, and that I would be out of the sanatorium. Tho the war did not end yet, victory is ours and the end is nearer than it was two years ago this month. The latter half of my hope was fulfilled. I chose the Lithuanian word for two reasons. First of all, Viltis sounds more euphemic. Secondly, everytime I thought of "hope" Bob Hope came up to my mind. Now, Bob Hope is a grand person, doing all he does for the service men, but it was not to him I wished it to dedicate, but to hope itself, to peace and to brotherhood. V. F. Beliajus Patrons (SINCE SEPT. 1944 TO DATE) \$150.00 Hugh E. Jones, Jr. \$15.00 Sgt. C. R. Dulinsky Chicago \$10.00 Sgt. Horton L. Crane Fairhope Edna Irene Cerny Chicago Pvt. E. R. Grossman Chicago S-Sgt. T. J. Klumpp Jr. Fairhope Pvt. G. Bernie Klumpp Fairhope Catherine Ann Middleton Mobile Marvin Nichols Fairhope Victor Rollo, BK. 3-c and Mrs. San Francisco Dr. Wm. E. Zeuch Mobile Wenetta Grybas Childs Chicago \$8.00 Pvt. Cabbot Boothe Fairhope Stanley C. Gniadek Chicago Helen Arendt Chicago Helen Daneliak Chicago Paul Gaston Fairhope Dorothy Gallagher Kansas City, Mo. Lt. & Mrs. Frank Johnson Chicago Chas. Kawalski SC 1-c Calumet City, Ill. T-5 Edw. Papciak Chicago Mr. & Mrs. A. Pelton Pasadena, Cal. Mrs. A. Rose Waukesha, Wis. Pinkie Richardson Chicago Rev. Laird Snell Fairhope Dean Saxton, Ph. M 3-c Plymouth, Mich. Mr. & Mrs. A. Rosenbloom Chicago Lt. Ed Totten Fairhope Lt. Edw. F. Carr Pittsburgh Mrs. A. Slaughtor Fairhope A. J. Azukas Washington, D. C. \$3.00 Prof. F. M. Goodhue Fairhope Patsle McNamara Chicago Eugenia Possien Fairhope Ruth Sigrid Nelson Mobile Alice Possien Point Clear, Ala. Sgt. Art Tumosa Chicago Mr. & Mrs. R. Rockwell Fairhope Frances Mitchell Fairhope \$2.50 S-Sgt. Mordy Arnold Fairhope Mrs. L. K. Riggs Fairhope Mrs. C. Stiger Fairhope \$2.00 Lt. Wm. Bain Chicago Mr. & Mrs. A. Board Chicago Lillian Cinskas Chicago

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Last Letter From Chas. Rudauskas, Written the Day Before His Death, on March 21 Dear Vyts:— Received your swell paper a couple of weeks ago—so thanks a million. I'm sorry as heck over my belated thank you for it—but I guess this army is making me more lazy than I ever was. We have been flying like mad lately as we are far behind the rest of the class—and we finish next month. Well anyhow, my day goes something like this: we get up at 0400 to fly, then when I get down I'm so tired that I just wash up and eat and hit the sack. Same thing day in and day out. If everything goes right we should be going over at the end of next month. And it's about time. Now, I'm beginning to feel that this army training has helped me. About this stage of the game you really begin to do a lot of thinking—especially about the future. I was piloting a B-17 for an hour and a half a couple of missions ago and it really was great. My pilot says he'll let me take some stick time in the B-29 as soon as he has a little more himself. (It was in the B-29 he met his death. One other died, 13 hospitalized). I'm feeling fine, and I hope you are the same, Vyts. The weather is usually swell here—unless a frost moves in from the North—as it did today, so we had snow and rain. The folks at home are well, and Raymond is still firing away at school. He's a junior now—one more year to go after this one. About all for now, so till later. As always, Charlie Lt. Rudauskas need think no more about his future. He rests at peace now at St. Kazimir's cemetery in Chicago. Charlie is the first LYS'r to die, and the only one of a group of forty who as yet has not gone across. While we prayed for the safety of our boys at the front lines, he met death in the safety of US, Clovis, N. M. It seems ironic. Charlie was as fine a lad as they come, a good Lithuanian kid who owned the typical qualities of friendliness, hospitality, jollity and filial obedience. Handsomely grown and of gentlemanly behavior and well loved by all. He was a Folk Festival vet and a good dancer. He leaves behind loving parents who worshiped him and a younger brother Raymond who is attending the Morgan Military School in Chicago. His parents are active in the Lithuanian circles and especially in the Zagarecui (People from Zagare) Society. They own the Hollywood Inn in the Brighton Park section of Chicago, one of the Lith neighborhoods, where many Lithuanian festivals and weddings, plays, and entertainments, including those of LYS, were held. Kazy was a member of the LYS, Keistutis, and Chicago Lith. Society. Requiem High Mass was sung at the Brighton Park Lith. Church of the Immaculate Conception (Nekalto Prasdejimo) on March 28 and interment at St. Kazimir's. He met his death at the age of 22. Ilsekis ramiai saltoj zemelej mylimasi drauge musu.